

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Original): A forging method for enlarging scheduled diameter-enlarging portions which are located at axial end portions of a bar-shaped raw material ~~by upsetting~~, the forging method[[,]] comprising the steps of:

holding an axial intermediate portion of the raw material with a holding die in a state in which the axial intermediate portion is prevented from being enlarged in diameter, and ~~disposing~~ the axial end portions of the raw material are disposed in respective forming dented portions formed provided at axial end portions of the holding die[[,]], and ~~disposing~~ providing a guide in each dented portion of the holding die such that the scheduled diameter-enlarging portions are provided in insertion passages formed in the respective guides and the guides are axially movable within the dented portions; and then simultaneously pressing the respective scheduled diameter-enlarging portions with punches in an axial direction of the raw material to fill the material of the scheduled diameter-enlarging portions in the forming dented portions while moving each guide in a direction opposite to a moving direction of each punch, thereby enlarging each scheduled diameter-enlarging portion in diameter[.].

wherein each insertion passage is configured to hold the schedule diameter-enlarging portion inserted therein so as to prevent buckling of the scheduled diameter-enlarging portion when the schedule diameter-enlarging portion is pressed in the axial direction.

Claim 2 (Canceled).

Claim 3 (Previously Presented): The forging method as recited in claim 1, wherein an initial clearance having a distance less than a buckle limit length at a cross-sectional area of

an exposed portion of the material is set between each guide and the holding die before initiation of movement of each punch, wherein the buckle limit length is the minimum length at which buckling occurs in the exposed portion of the raw material when the scheduled diameter-expanding portion of the raw material is pressed under predetermined pressing force with the punch in the axial direction of the raw material.

Claim 4 (Original): The forging method as recited in claim 3, wherein a time-lag is set between initiation of movement of each punch and initiation of movement of each guide.

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): The forging method as recited in claim 1, wherein each guide is provided with a pressing portion to be fitted in the forming dented portion at a tip end portion of the guide.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented): The forging method as recited in claim 1, wherein an insertion passage side edge portion of a tip end of each guide and/or an edge portion of a raw material fitting aperture of the holding die for fitting the axial intermediate portion of the raw material are chamfered.

Claims 7-11 (Canceled).

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): A forging apparatus for enlarging scheduled diameter-enlarging portions [[of]] which are axial end portions of a bar-shaped raw material by upsetting, comprising:

a holding die for holding an axial intermediate portion of the raw material in a ~~buckle preventing state~~ state in which the axial intermediate portion is prevented from being enlarged in diameter;

two forming dented portions in which ~~the~~ a respective scheduled diameter-enlarging portion is to be disposed, the forming dented portions being formed at axial end portions of the holding die;

two guides each having an insertion passage in which the scheduled diameter-enlarging portion is inserted, the guides being axially movable within the dented portions; and

two punches for simultaneously pressing the scheduled diameter-enlarging portions in an axial direction thereof of the raw material,

wherein each guide is capable of moving in a direction opposite to a moving direction of each punch, and

wherein the insertion passage of each guide is configured to hold the scheduled diameter-enlarging portion inserted therein so as to prevent buckling of the scheduled diameter-enlarging portion when the scheduled diameter-enlarging portion is pressed in the axial direction.

Claim 13 (Original): The forging apparatus as recited in claim 12, further comprising two guide moving devices each for moving the guide in a direction opposite to a moving direction of the punch, each guide moving device being connected to corresponding guide.

Claim 14 (Canceled).

Claim 15 (Previously Presented): The forging apparatus as recited in claim 12, wherein each guide is provided with a pressing portion to be fitted in a forming dented portion at a tip end portion of the guide.

Claim 16 (Previously Presented): The forging apparatus as recited in claim 12, wherein an insertion passage side edge portion of a tip end of each punch and/or an edge portion of a raw material fitting aperture of the holding die for fitting the axial intermediate portion are chamfered.